



MiPOesias

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INSIDE POETRY:

interview with **FRANZ WRIGHT**

by **JENNI RUSSELL**

BETSY WHEELER

CAMPBELL MCGRATH

NEW POETRY

MARK BIBBINS

AND MORE

PLUS:

MICHAEL PARKER reviews **ANNIE FINCH**

APRIL CARTER GRANT with burlesque-blues singer **MATHER LOUTH**

william stobb Nervous Systems

Nervous Systems, the debut collection by William Stobb, host of miPORadio's "Hard to Say"—selected for the National Poetry Series by August Kleinzahler, who writes: "Mr. William Stobb has nerve, talent, and engages this madly accelerating, often nearly indecipherable world in what's called real time. And he manages it without sacrificing emotional force. That's something special." Donald Revell writes, "More than ever before we need a poetry of hard peace. Thank heaven William Stobb is writing it." Publisher's Weekly says, "Stobb's well-titled debut begins smart and ends tender... inventively stereoscopic... luminous descriptions call to mind the early Robert Hass." Available at major booksellers, like Amazon, Powell's and Barnes and Noble.

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Grace Cavalieri *Water on the Sun*
A Bilingual Edition Translated Into Italian by Maria Enrico



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ON THE COVER
"MISS RED" BY HOLLY PICANO 24" x 36" acrylic on canvas - "Miss Red" is a perfect example of Picano's use of color and attitude: Her inferno-red hair falls against an almost neon-green jawline. A curl of the same red hair partially covers the woman's eye as she looks up from her electric-blue glass of wine to meet the viewer's gaze. Holly believes people should celebrate their beauty and sensuality, and she captured that idea in this painting.

MiPOesias

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FEATURE

8 INSIDE POETRY: INTERVIEW WITH FRANZ WRIGHT In the first edition of this periodic poetry column, Jenni Russell probes the poet on his most recent book, *Earlier Poems* (Knopf 2007), which is his first four books collected. Future editions may be interviews or book reviews.

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DIDI MENENDEZ was born in Santo Suarez, Cuba in 1960. Her family came to Miami in 1962. She has lived in Florida, California, North Carolina and Alaska. Her current State of mind and residence is not mentioned. She is the founder and creator of *MiPOesias* magazine and publications. She considers herself an American Cuban.



AMY KING lives in Brooklyn and is the author of the poetry collections *I'm the Man Who Loves You* (BlazeVOX Books, 2007), *Antidotes for an Alibi* (BlazeVOX Books, 2005), and *The People Instruments* (Pavement Saw Press, 2003). E-Books are available through Duration Press and Dusie Press online. Amy teaches Creative Writing and English at SUNY Nassau Community College and has taught a workshop of her own design, "Making the Urban Poetic" at Poets House in Manhattan. Amy received a MacArthur Scholarship for Poetry. Please visit www.amyking.org for more.



WILLIAM E. STOBB is the author of the National Poetry Series collection *Nervous Systems* (Penguin Books) and the chapbook *For Better Night Vision* (Black Rock Press). His poems appear in the print journals *American Poetry Review*, *American Literary Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *Interim* and the online publication *Three Candles*. Stobb is Associate Professor of English at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where he works with David Krump to organize a monthly reading series at The Pump House Regional Arts Center. His miPORadio column, *Hard to Say*, features the work of contemporary poets like Dean Young, Brenda Hillman, Tao Lin, and Donald Revell.



MICHELLE BUCHANAN runs a mechanical contracting firm in Upstate New York. When she is not working, Michelle enjoys spending time with family and friends, painting, poetry, and creating her podcast, *One on One with Michelle Buchanan*, which airs on MiPORadio.



MEGHAN PUNSCHKE resides in New York City and has an MFA in Poetry from The New School. She is the curator and host of *Word of Mouth*, a reading series on the Lower East Side dedicated to poets and fiction writers. Her work can be found in *No Tell Motel*, *Coconut*, and more. *Stratification*, her first collection of poetry, is forthcoming. More information is available at megpunschke.com.



GRACE CAVALIERI was given the key to the city of Greenville, South Carolina, and February 16 was proclaimed "Grace Cavalieri Day" by the Mayor of Greenville for the play *Quilting the Sun*, which brought together the black and white cultural communities. She was featured in February/March 2007 issue of *Writers' Digest* and has 14 books and 21 produced plays to her credit. Grace is the Book Review Editor of *The Montserrat Review* and the producer/host of *The Poet and the Poem from the Library of Congress* for public radio. Her audio columns *Innuendoes* and *On Location* are presented by miPORadio.



DIEGO QUIROS Diego Quiros credits all his creative work to conversations with a Muse he describes as "a naked woman with long dark green hair, green eyes, and green skin." He claims she walks around his home in South Florida where he leads a happy life along with his family. Diego currently represents Cafecafe for IBPC selections, and produces the Podcast "Deconstructions" with longtime friend Hector Milia.



DAN COFFEY reviews anthologies, book-length collections, and journals for *MiPOesias*. He is the Literatures and Languages Librarian at Iowa State University and lives in Ames, Iowa with his wife Genya and their Yorkie, Greta. His revamped blog, *The Square of the Hypotenuse*, will be devoted to reviews of poetry publications, music, and the occasional film.



MICHAEL PARKER reviews book-length collections of poetry. His poetry and entertainment (film, music, and book) reviews appear on his blog. Michael is a sales and marketing, administrative, and end-user documentation specialist for a video security and software company. He enjoys running marathons, film, literature, painting, illustration, web design, and poetry. He, his wife, two sons, daughter, and Lucky the dog live in Utah.



JENNI RUSSELL lives in North Carolina with her husband Jack. She keeps a personal blog at Chanticleer. Besides poetry, she enjoys lifting weights and spending time with her seven-year-old daughter. Currently, she is writing a memoir. .



FRANCISCO ARAGÓN is the author of *Puerta del Sol* (Bilingual Press) and editor of *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry* (University of Arizona Press). His poems and translations have appeared in various anthologies and journals. Aragón directs Letras Latinas at the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Among the projects he oversees are the Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize, Momotombo Press, and *Latino Poetry Review*. He is a member of the Macondista Writing Community and is on the board of the Guild Complex. Letras Latinas' blog is latinopoetryreview.blogspot.com.



APRIL CARTER GRANT was born in a barn in the late '70s. After working as a creative in the advertising, gaming, and travel industries, April started her own design and marketing service to help new businesses launch. In October 2006, she was one of eight finalists in the Cut + Paste Digital Design Tournament, and most recently, she was invited to demonstrate features of Adobe's Creative Suite 3 (CS3) at the Adobe Creative License Conference in Hollywood. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband Dan.



I am not sure why I didn't think of this sooner. I had a V8 moment! Print-on-demand companies have made it possible for me to offer you a new *MiPOesias Magazine* available online and in print. What makes this edition different is that you can download the full issue via an Adobe PDF file, or you can view online on your favorite browser or buy a copy right there and then. I really had not fully visualized this until April Carter Grant joined us a few months ago. She is producing the PDFs for me. She is a professional graphic artist whose work I have been following for the past five years. When a magazine goes print, there are other factors involved regarding not only the layout but also the content. Just poetry was not enough. There had to be interviews and reviews. I hope our new Poetic Profiles by Dan Coffey, book reviews by Michael Parker and Inside Poetry by Jenni Russell—besides our featured poets—will keep you coming back for more each month. If you have any commentary you would like to share with me, please email at didimenendez@hotmail.com. See you online and now in print too.

Didi Menendez

Betsy Wheeler

Swimming Underground, I Float Face Up Thinking of Railroads

This is the logic of a bottom-dweller.

This that old practice of wanting; the sound of a horsefly leashed to habit, his green eyes unblinking.

This mind-stable is not fit for children.

This was a station.

This crater-lake hooded with darkness.

This under rock, under soil, under sand, worms, grass, trees, sky, under the clouds and then the stars.

This ground is black water-echoes.

That railing keeps the peepers at a distance.

That road to the surface could slick me away.

This here the temptation.

This plotting best left to the fugitives.

Their absence slaves after their ghostliness: silent, man-shaped holes.

In this moment I wish you were here.

This hidden spot.

The lake is fed, as are we.

And in this way are we aided in reaching.

This next pool—shallow and young.

I fear this station abandoned.

The builders believed in their footing; the solid rock overhead uncertain but trusted.

This would be the start of their journey.

Robbed and Swung Low Into Reverie

And so the wind, humid but welcome, comes around to rub its faint body against our houses, attaching everyone to everyone else. Nobody is famed for anything; not the hymn-writers, or sous-chefs, not the marathoners. All just living or have lived in the particular house of the body.

One body is similar in silhouette to eight other bodies, is opposite in skin texture to six. One body will fit perfectly in bed with nine others, will violently reject seven, and is momentarily indistinguishable from five. Here is where things get tricky.

Some of these bodies will find each other on scooters in the streets of Rome, or weeding in the public gardens of Minneapolis, maybe trespassing the high dunes of North Carolina’s coastline. The best-known meetings will become the stuff of hymns. Others, the catalyst for wars. Were it up to me, I would have written one of the odds much higher. Guess which one.

I’d like to say our young bodies fit perfectly, but it’s more accurate to say our limbs locked like softly notched gears, our engines wheeling. I was stunned, I mean stung, I mean our skin sung brightly on that foreign river. We looked impossible, effortless. A low tide. Love’s circuitry unmapped but gently numbered. He was of the eight. Or maybe the nine. Oh, I believe in believing in the nines.

Betsy Wheeler just finished reading *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* by Michael Chabon and feels utterly (fantastically) changed by it. She is co-editor, with Dean Gorman, of *Pilot* and Pilot Books. Her chapbook, *Start Here*, is forthcoming from Small Anchor Press.



Sophie Klahr

Day Sail w/Dental Appreciation

The sky I tuck like a cold garage key into my little breast pockets. The water like interference or a vehicle to grace. There is no one here. Peter Bjork, you are my umlaut. I poke & tear you about my wrangled heart while your evil wool sock seeks a sort of nirvana. Peter Bjork, the tiniest man lives inside you. He wears blue deck shoes. Peter Bjork, I see you there beyond the jib, leaning rail-less & quantified. Your backside is luscious, methinks. Look there, in the fourth wave starboard: the beast grinning through the foam.

Mark Bibbins

Viva Isabella Blow

Tonight we walk across
the grounds where only
an hour ago fog blocked

a moon so brilliant that
we now could cut each
other’s hair by its light.

Art on the walls, salt
in the pond, the greenest
grass between our toes—

we asked the driver to stop
at the beach and then
at the carnival and we

woke in Murray Hill
by midnight.
Those lives
were probably someone

else’s, but it pleased us
to pose alongside them.
Fake it till you break it was

the refrain that propped
us up that summer. *I don’t
want to be kissed*

*by all and sundry,
I want to be kissed by
the people I love.*

Viewers, we knew
better. This will be
a year without hats.

Prequel: West Broadway

An actual naked human stands
on a pedestal in the street, naked
and with arms outstretched, naked

amidst literal feathers blown—
some clinging to skin and hair,
some wavering along the concrete

or skyward—by a fan operated by
an intern. Hair, makeup, lighting all
represented; pedestal, body, feathers

all white. You see this naked body,
this man or this woman, you notice it
but don’t stop because you figure they

are only making art, in which you don’t
believe unless it’s used in advertising,
in which you do. There is a war a few

blocks over, another war hiding
behind a melancholy water tower.
Maybe someone will take a hatchet

to our hyphenated necks but we’re
not going to bother with bodies
like those any more. White galleries

up and down side streets hide all the art.
City is hyperbole as ocean is hyperbole
as desert is definitely hyperbole,

oasis burning out on the overrated
horizon where every blue gets
bleached into naked naked white.

And Does This Team Look Tasty in Attack

Arms and legs cutting
the numbered field

are meteorological
but faster, a flock.

So far I’ve made
a decent living proving

negatives: warily
I wait, choosing

the nest over
the eggs, acolyte

of mysterious ears
and weirder eyes.

Yes, but what
of exemplary movements

forming arcs and angles
that argue against

the corporeal, even
as they prove it—

this is what or these are
all we need? Add more

weather to our misery
and I think I trust it is.



Brian Battjer

Mark Bibbins has written *The Dance of No Hard Feelings*, forthcoming from Copper Canyon Press, and the Lambda Award-winning *Sky Lounge*. He lives in Manhattan and teaches at The New School.

Intimacy Keeps Happening Here

*There’s a ton of the twist
but we’re fresh out of shout.*

—James Murphy

Squeeze a megalopolis onto an island and look
at what the ocean steals from our buildings, come

back tomorrow it will seem the same. Marigolds

grow vulgar in every square and the populace puts
oily handprints on the huge cardboard sundial

near City Hall. Why does one block smell like poppers

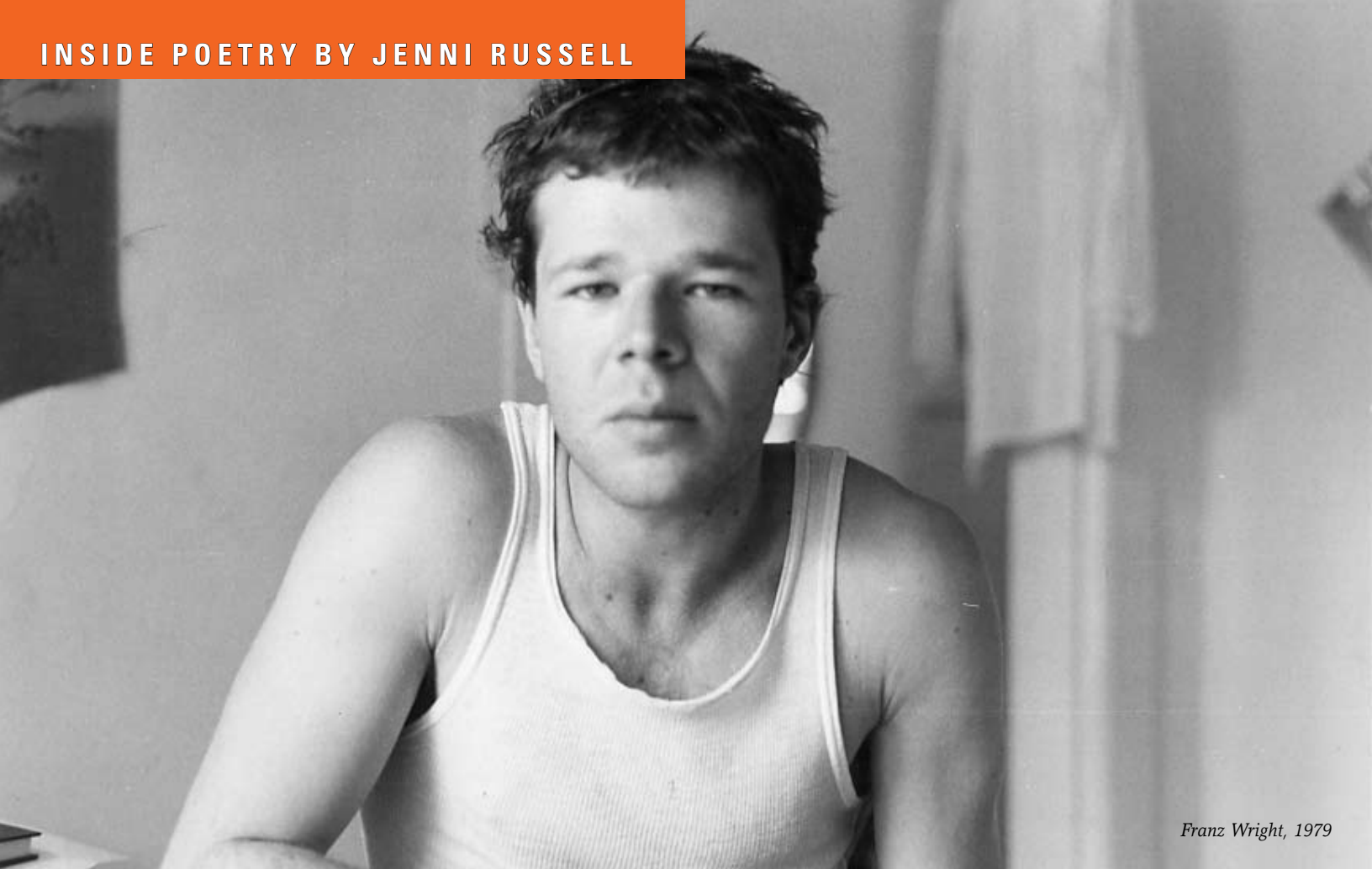
and another, just south, goosedown? Eventually
we learn to walk through anything, all our rhythms

preprogrammed. Show me what doesn’t cohere

and I’ll show you something we haven’t earned
—no oath, no notes, no fingering RECORD—

even sun pummeling through the humid city air

is a dare. Come on, another dirigible is hooking up
with our tallest building; truly, it never gets old.



Franz Wright, 1979

Franz Wright

Franz Wright’s most recent book, *Earlier Poems* (Knopf 2007), is his first four books collected. The gentle yet troubled voice that is peculiarly his own is recognizable in the first poem in the book and keeps a continuity throughout.

Wright, to judge from this collection, had found his voice, or it had found him, right from the start. In his younger years his life had much of the abysmal hard knocks of the American underground, yet the effect of it was to enhance and not degrade his sensitivity. Unnamable psychological states, tonal mastery, and an inventive style make these poems beautiful, haunting, and memorable. I recently asked Mr. Wright a series of questions, some of them about the poems found in this book.

Your most recent book, *Earlier Poems*, is your first four books collected. While writing “*The One Whose Eyes Open When You Close Your Eyes*,” where did you live? Did you have a job, friends, favorite hangout, high hopes for the future? What was your life like as a young poet?

The poems in that first collection I wrote between the ages of 18 and, I guess, 27, something like that. It was finished not long after my dad’s final illness and death in New York in 1980.

After I graduated from high school in 1971, I traveled around Europe for a few months, returned and spent some time with my dad in New York, returned to California (where I’d gone to high school) and worked at a gas station on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, then started at Oberlin College in northern Ohio in January 1972. I graduated from Oberlin in 1977 and tried grad school for a few months but it very quickly became apparent to me that I was not cut out for the MFA

route, so I left and a period of years of wandering began—I lived all over the country, though mainly in New York and New England. I was very serious about writing. That always came first, and frankly, when I look back, I am not sure how I survived. It was a different time, there was a more optimistic spirit in the country, and financially it was easier, I guess. I was always broke, but I didn’t feel poor. I had wonderful friends who helped me survive. And I had more lives than a cat.

One of my favorites in *Earlier Poems* is “*Asking for my Younger Brother*.” Can you tell me a little about how this poem came to be?

My brother had a much harder time than I did growing up. When my father left my mother (and, incidentally, my brother and me), he was only three, while I was a fairly independent and rowdy eight-year-old. My mother drove the three of us across country from Minneapolis to San Francisco in 1961. Later my mother remarried a guy who turned out to be incredibly brutal toward us, and my brother was always running away. So this was one time I went looking for him in Reno, Nevada. I left “home” when I was eighteen and never really went back.

I find some of your poems to be tragic, but they’re always resonating and entertaining. In other words, your poems are enjoyable to read. How important is it to entertain a reader?

I’m not especially interested in trying to entertain anyone. I was just trying to make poems that were simple and clear and mysterious, to some degree—spontaneous-seeming but with depths. Poems that were, I used to say, completely concrete and completely unparaphrasable, like reality.

Your poem “*My Brother Takes a Hammer to the Mirror*” is dedicated to the memory of Thomas James. Who is Thomas James and what kind of influence did he have on you?

Thomas James published one very beautiful collection of poems in the mid-seventies and not long after apparently took his own life, as people sometimes do. I don’t know anything about him, though I recall rumors of conflicted sexual identity, maybe some drugs were involved, nothing terribly unusual—I sensed in the title poem of his book, *Letters to a Stranger*, that he was drawn to or felt an ambivalent love for the Catholic Church, and I identified with that.

Some poets feel uncomfortable writing so personally, and others have subjects that they feel are untouchable: family, work, or eroticism. Is there any subject you avoid? If not, which subject do you find most challenging?

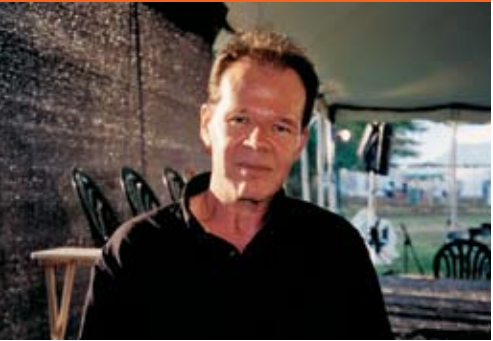
I write about whatever presents itself to me—I don’t feel limited to any particular subject or mood. Language seems to dictate content, and whatever content there is seems to me fairly irrelevant until I am close to finishing a poem. I never know what I am going to write next until I find myself immersed in it.

While reading the books in *Earlier Poems*, I noticed the first two books were serious in tone, whereas the last two books have more moments of dark humor, which is characteristic of your recent work. Did you eventually start to see the comedy in tragic situations? And do you think humor can be related to coping or healing?

I don’t know that there was anything deliberate about the appearance of a kind of dark humor—maybe it was just part of my personality (it runs

Franz Wright was born in Vienna in 1953 and grew up in the Northwest, the Midwest, and Northern California. His most recent works include *The Beforelife*; *Ill Lit: Selected and New Poems*; *Walking to Martha’s Vineyard*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in April 2004; and *God’s Silence*. His latest collection is 2007’s *Earlier Poems*.

He is the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Fellowship, and the PEN/Voelcker Prize, among other honors. He works at the Edinburg Center for Mental Health and the Center for Grieving Children and Teenagers. Wright lives in Waltham, Massachusetts with his wife, Elizabeth.



in my family), and I reached a point where I felt confident enough in my writing to allow it to enter in a bit.

You were recently the poet-in-residence at Brandeis University. You’ve also taught workshops in Provincetown and Emerson. Are there certain “tips” regarding craft or process that you always tell your students? Will you share one?

I haven’t done that much teaching, and when I do, I prefer teaching literature courses. Workshops can be fun, or dreadful, depending on rapport with the students, and I don’t have anything against them—I try to get students to read a lot of poetry and become familiar with English prosody—though I think a writing workshop is the wrong place for a young person who is actually serious about becoming a writer.

continued, next panel

Are there any poems in these first four books (Earlier Poems) that you think of as pivotal, ones that changed your approach, poems where you had a stylistic breakthrough?

Actually, there are a number of poems which would fit your description—when I wrote “Alcohol”, for example (in Provincetown in the fall of 1983 while standing at the bar of an establishment I probably should not have been in, and while listening to some ear-shattering blues band, this poem more or less appeared before my eyes in its finished form, and I had to get out of there and write it down fast). I’d been reading a lot of Beckett and Pinter, and I think suddenly saw the possibility of a very stripped down kind of inner soliloquy, or a dramatic work in miniature which nevertheless possessed the sense a lyric poem can convey—with its access to certain improvisational uses of music and rhythm and syntax and lineation—of something infinite somehow housed in a little box that closes, as Yeats put it, with a satisfying click.

A short poem like “Untitled (Will I always be eleven...)” gave me an even more startling example of a certain knack I was trying to develop for a certain form of devastating understatement—while still preserving, behind its apparent plainness of diction, in a deniable or seemingly effortless way, an acute awareness of music and form. I learned to count every syllable a thousand times in an eleven-line poem like that one.

And in a piece like “Boy Leaving Home,” I found a way to write a long poem—and this is something that later came to interest me again when I was putting together my more recent last three collections—with subvertible narrative qualities as

well as, once again, a lot of the qualities of the short intense lyric of the kind I love, one that is severely formal and at the same time wildly and unpredictably open and free.

What are some of the changes you have seen in American poetry since you first began writing? Do you feel positively, negatively, or indifferent to current trends or schools of thought?

As far as different schools of thought, I think the differences between different poets have become grotesquely exaggerated on account of the introduction in what passes for literary criticism now of the crudest sort of highly personal venom on the part of writers who no doubt have much in common—at least their love of poetry!

I’ve mentioned (and this may come as a shock to some) my love of very formal poetry, yet I’m drawn as well to certain avant-garde experiments with language itself. Now in my own private opinion, a lot of the formal or the language-oriented poetry that has been written in this country over the past thirty or so years is so excruciatingly soulless and boring that it’s a true shame. I myself feel perfectly free to avail myself of any of the vastly various dimensions of the poem, from the most inscrutable and hermetic to the most nakedly simple and literal.

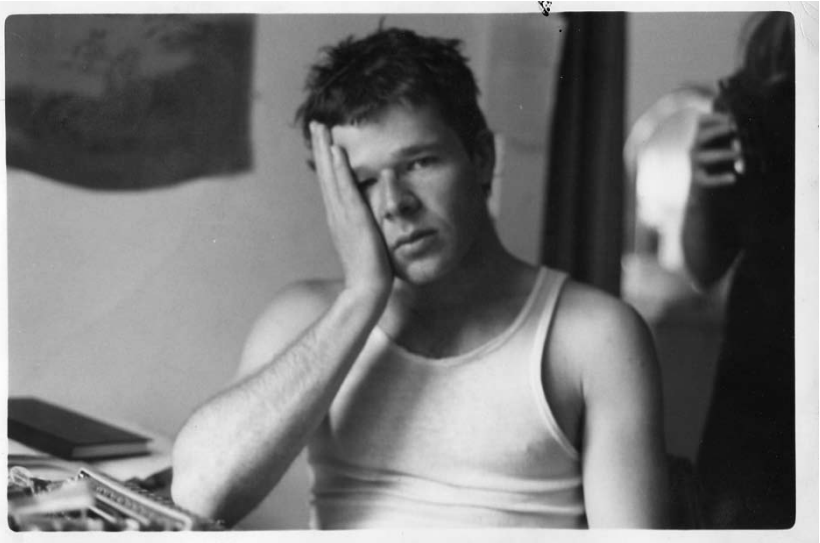
Another big change that’s occurred over time is of course the proliferation of writing

programs and now the internet—both of which, in my own humble and private opinion, are robbing young poets of the necessary decade (at least) of unselfconscious obscurity in which, by torturous trial and error on the part of someone with genuine talent, a few real poems might be written. I think that the more poetry gets written, the rarer poetry becomes. However, no doubt fate, as it always does, will conspire with circumstances to torture a few solitary sufferers into poetry and keep the whole thing going.

You have a chapbook coming out with Vallum in Winter 2007. What other projects do you have in the works? Will you share a recent poem?

I also have another chapbook prepared for fall publication by Marick Press in Michigan called *Wheeling Motel*. And I can’t give you that poem, as it is forthcoming in a well-known magazine that might frown on its appearing anywhere else, but I think I can share a poem that has already appeared (in the still-marvelous-after-all-these-years *Field Magazine*, in whose pages I’m proud to say I first started to publish poems back in the mid-seventies).

[See *Out of Delusion*, next panel.]



Out of Delusion

In blue branches the moon feigning
coma all morning, always
fading and drifting away
A book you wrote decades ago now
seems stranger than somebody else’s

Of the slumbering
hand,
this change
ineluctable, cloudlike
I speak in the mask of the first person

Not as myself, not in the glory
of action, of experience
when time and dying stop

but as anyone in the inbetween hours
the hours alone, or traveling, or waking in a strange room
or the moment when friends all fall silent, and each
gazes into his own past and his own end
That is what I meant, the way things look then

Music, silence, the word

I’d emulate
these little
candles just lit
for the newly
dead, enter
the endless, the
original words
which shine
from and behind
and through words
and be through with them
through with all
words

So desperately tired of the long, long flight from God

One hourglass of eventual
cremation dust, thinking
get me out of here

Riding the subway I glimpse myself
in the seat next to mine
in the adjacent universe
one urinous drooling but otherwise fine human
hamster attempting and repeatedly failing
to pour cough syrup into a spoon

Thinking the sky is a river of souls
as everyone knows
darkness and blizzards
come from the future
and the road is long
as the memory of a child

Thinking I
could not bear to know what I do

No one knows no one like I do

Sparrow at the gates of heaven
or maggot at the gates of heaven,
there I am
with all the others
from the twentieth century of horror

And that is a beginning

Cynthia Sailer

Self Destruction

Hysteria is not so much an illness as a technique of staying blank and absent from oneself, with symptoms as a substitute to screen this absence.—Masud Kahn

Tie the sow up.
“I’ve just been to the pork butchers”

and been watched.

And been owned.
In a police resurrection

the condition is to spite the police.
To free the frontiers of the time-lag,
the most we can do

the symbol-rich other, helplessness,
the “plumed fowl”

come, come, I can’t bear it any longer
my mammal brain has been interrupted

I can’t call these parts dull
when they’re attacking each other

the majority of childish things

the all in one
pile of shit on the floor

my soup stinks
of old behavior

of illness or whatever.

Why do I feel like you want to suffocate me
before you make me better?

My legs are cut off like a cows
and swimming in fluid—this
cut, this fake desirous

lamb is my phallus. My imperial brain.

These rampant parts that I loved
before my anxiety took over.

The telephone rings, I suppose
it’s my heart. I hold it above
the floor of the truck. I hold it
against its death, but it’s too late.

It’s time for photographs. The hours
they go from labor and thought.
Or the thought is theirs

the animals that are these organs in dreams
and look into their faces. I’m detached from their feeling,

sweating you out of my body.
The figure flees. As if one were to say
more violence. More law. By which

all the stock footage
and the sucky foul-play

of being crazy, of being perverted
time
and so we recede. I want to say back,
hello blanket. The blank shape

of my mind, having a victim
send me a note of pure nothing

in the system of “I rid myself”

every time I notice why I was bad
consummating with the future
of a plastic machine or a corpse

while the decorous camera overtakes us,
an invasive environment
that had sullied our objects

and our workrooms. That which
denies us, not knowing

the floor or in fondling
our only capital.

And desire was inoperative
a dog cooked like a dog.

Our skin, the flesh wound,

through which the white foam

of the ocean flung against us
aging in stock film

or from the documents of television.

And the woman was naked,
so that my tongue was against a dangerous fragment

in a company of which
you and I are the same

pissing through the pipe
of self-expression

or roping up the cattle or
communicating with youth

who control the destruction
of an idea like a building,

but their motive is slippery.

What you can use as a hostage
making images like pornography

no environment is sleepy

but bemused “genitals...with purple
veins” does something
to our insides, in which we escape

or shove it back up into the wound.
So that it’s crudeness is banal.
That untimely totality

as supplement on my shoe
some part

a state of vagueness, nothing
to separate us from a situation

nothing to be the better part
of me—

The face opened up on the screen.
These lines of a wolf
relate to a failure of a mother

because location is forever
staring right back at me.

Accomplices suspend

a gap where real cultural happens.

Half of my family asks me to wake up,

a wild fantasy
to cry over the drainpipe
and construct oneself out of

the shadow
the thing of non-fiction. My hand fits
in her anus. I can’t believe

these skinny dens of cold
as someone called us

the thing and I
how they are like
humans

behind a desk
of sheer apathy.
I can’t say.

It took awhile to find total isolation.

Someone has died.

Is that future predawn?

I see them in Rome. I imagine
my shoulder is lecturing on morality

the girl I had raped, openly, or with
anxiety. An alteration is not a symptom.

There wasn’t so much love as I loaded

the gun. Or there wasn’t so much blood
as I performed the task.

We’re together documenting the cruelty

the public resumed laughing at us.

And so laughing was important to oppose
the “nervous prostration”
when labor fell apart
or self expression fails.

Time supersedes
so that no one could ever look at us

As though overcome by silence
or by interpretation
slouching toward, at best

I hope I cope with the grid
at best I looked into
her so that she wasn’t dropped

a zero essential

the new architecture
of reassuring things

they have their baby. It’s just a boundary
of excrement. It isn’t the same as death
rooting around in filth
like a machine. Blowing up the

empty binge

I feel it when you kiss me.	just saying that history is civil war	The background cannot exist without something to reflect	an entire sunset rests, departed from the others
The privacy of analysis	I have to seem lasting for “cross purposes” a guard, a ticket booth, abstraction	“ a flickering hesitation”	in benign jogs and whose horse power seizes in fight or flight
I will take my text I will take my image bastard	I remember her leaning over me.	resolving one symptom meant to know	we cannot know arm and arm along
sewn on my sleeve. The hard surface cuts her hand a moment’s relief,	I don’t think I’m ashamed	the lofty phallic woman with her legs spread over one truth,	these fantasies, we find words for it next to Russian women in the creamy suffering like pigeons, they invoke
but what is repeated is false an infection	in my dirty solitude the ugly thing	one slip and would she and would she	they invade, swallowed up in the sand. trash surrounds the earth like an arm chair
to take my form of illness as a face darting toward danger. A sign	nesting in lots. And I love my moral masochism, a need for the other	institute morality the vampire memory	and folded into the “love and battle.”
for remoteness.	“the vision without commentary.”	can hide nothing. But to order is emptiness	When we think of this common illness with a few exceptions “this monster, the body”
I go to sleep among several prisons	The still-living transform the film, like the animate/inanimate	“after being—doing and being done to. But first, being.”	to us more obsence creatures
so now I must go with escorts and chained to dread. The object is unconscious, moving towards disowning	immediate relief, and yet, it moves closer in clothing items like a hermit moves in	To know that it was cruelty as if they were historical	in primitive play and sleep folded into comfort
who is it we shake its hand. A refusal of puberty and intellectualization.	boring freedom, striving	we cannot keep dispatching puss	against the pangs of beginning
This is the kitchen sink I squatted over with hysterical communication	for a tiny speck of highway	splitting off from going back and looking at the disappointment, the thing of disappointment.	cut into skin, the symbols of battle, the sun melts away.
my tights ripped along the seams.	I ash into the trashcan	The real montage, haphazard, and yet located	The activity of children playing
She didn’t want to know I’m nostalgic for ghosts. So I hid the temporary irritations	given examples. Along our sleep once preoccupied the hysterical envelope,	wandering down avenues until our feet were swollen	with odd beliefs and dogs holding the stick, hold the sick upright
of war. And there is a war overhead, fighting planes and damaging the value	play, provided a problem it was grass	frozen like if the lion comes	where we have not held the fast image but rather submerged in bowels
of a thing blown to pieces; therefore, justified. No person without the public to contain us. A block	that our decoy conditions and fights amused us	or like an ethnographer imposed, horsetied to a charge faking it, faking the bakery faking the midnight air, so that humans have nature	the body wakes to a hand forgotten in a snowfield.
surrounds my only inhibition. To put my hands somewhere courageous,	and the greatest bodies slit sideways,	and nature, if they knew what was behind the wall. They relate	People live here in the modern architecture my mind expands
a privation. I remember when you were different, a colleague	and I have our out of it was being whored	their hairless divide separates the Eastern	and the exceptions of the wettest parts of the body
stripped down in the factory.	or being oversensitive the term for self-cure we follow	murals intact	milked, for babies will leave us, slippery mounds imagine all mankind is negative.
The characters, obliterated, or drowning in ambiguity	and the lonely situation. The sexuality of	throughout the afternoon. The fact separated off from being laid	
like passion, a clean break is costly, “form is costly”	stating your desire like a broken teacup		
when we succeed to live in violence or absence	I write nothing.		

Cynthia Sillers is currently writing a dissertation on narcissism and perversion in pathological group organization. She is a board member of Small Press Traffic and previously co-curated New Yipes Reading Series (formerly New Brutalism). “Self-Destruction” is the last poem in the manuscript *Ladies of Leisure*, which investigates 19th-Century ideas of sickness and cure, the films of Ingmar Bergman, psychoanalysis and writings about the body. She is grateful for the contributions from the following writers, whose work appear in this poem: Jacques Lacan, Lauren Shufan, Brandon Brown, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Roland Barthes, Rae Armantrout, Donald Winnicott, and Virginia Woolf.



Mather Louth has the BURLESQUE BLUES

Showmanship is all but lost these days, with onstage drunkenness, lip-synching, and mechanical movement seemingly the norm. But from the moment she takes the stage, generally in a cozy bar, MATHER LOUTH makes it clear that the audience is sharing a rare experience. Her talent for singing is enhanced by a natural power of presence: From her impeccable makeup and dress (think high-necked velvet and corsets and fishnets, oh my!) to evocative facial performance, Louth is a captivating subject. Forget simply listening—it’s hard not to *watch* during her demanding delivery of what she calls “burlesque blues,” an enticing blend of drums, electric guitar, saxophone, voice... and the all-important tease.

How did you come up with “burlesque blues” to describe your music?

I’ve always been intrigued by the underground world of burlesque. It was and is about the mystery of femininity and glorifies the individual woman in her dichotomy of strength and vulnerability. A true burlesque performer is able to capture the attention of men and women alike, [and] can hold an entire audience captive until the moment the lights come down and she leaves the stage.

To me, burlesque blues is the marriage of that feminine mystique with one of the purest, most primal musical expressions—the blues. I once had a stranger tell me that something in my voice had caused “an awakening” in them, and that “something” is why I consider myself a blues singer.

What artists inspire you? Do you align your sound with any other musicians... or hear that you remind people of anyone?

Oh, my inspirations are always diverse and oftentimes unexpected.

Certainly good literature is a continued source of inspiration, as is good music. I love the literary works of Huxley, Vonnegut, Orwell, and classic playwrights. I love Nick Cave for his uncanny ability to tell a story. Of course, I am also highly influenced by the

Velvet Underground, BRMC, Mark Lanegan, The Stooges, Garbage, My Bloody Valentine, Billie Holiday... and many others. Each artist I listen to offers a different musical viewpoint.

The comparisons I receive tend to be as eclectic as the music I listen to. However, I do get overwhelming comparisons to classic female jazz and contemporary blues singers. But rather than offer specific names, I would suggest for the readers to listen the music and find their own touchstones in my work.

I’m always interested in the process of creating music. Do you have a standard procedure, whether planned or incidental?

I wish I did... it might very well make things easier! Sometimes, I will stumble upon a guitar tone or keyboard setting and create a song that suits it. Other times, I will write prose that later becomes the basis for lyrics. I’ve written a few songs within one or two nights, and others have been pieced together from various writings and riffs.

What presence or message, if any, do you hope to convey while performing?

Well, above all else, I want to establish a connection with the audience. To me, the best performances I’ve seen are ones where I’ve come away with something I didn’t have upon walking in to the show. There is a very

intimate exchange that occurs within the medium of live performance, and I hope to always give the audience a piece of who I am. Some nights, there are demons that need to be exorcised, and other nights, there is beauty that needs to be expressed. But, good or bad, success or failure, the performances will always transmit the truth of the moment.

You play your guitar upside-down and backward. What’s up with that?

Ah, yes, always a point of intrigue! The interesting thing is that when I first started playing guitar back East, I learned standard lefty. However, I left behind my acoustic guitar in the midst of a cross-country move. My first roommate here in the West owned a lousy green Ibanez with one bridge missing—making it a five-string—and sold it to me for somewhere around \$30. Rather than go through the hassle of shipping and insuring my lefty acoustic and waiting for it to arrive, I began playing the Ibanez as it was. It didn’t take too long for my brain to make the adjustments, and eventually I grew to appreciate the newfound low-end that playing backwards offered me. It’s an integral element to my sound.

A popular belief about blues singers is that the “real” singers are the ones who show their souls unapologetically through facial expression.

by April Carter Grant
photos by Larry “Darkman” Clark



Your facial expressions during performances are whimsical and seem to be influenced by or in response to the words you’re singing. Are they natural reflexes, part of a stage persona, or intended exclamation points to accentuate specific lyrics?

To be honest, I really consider it a case of both spontaneity and intention. I am a glutton for language and storytelling, and so oftentimes, I create “characters” in my songs. In a way, those characters dictate the live performance. For instance, in my song “Vultures,” my protagonist (so to speak) is a weather-beaten middle-aged drifter. The intentional element enters when I give the character a voice. However, sometimes (if I am lucky), I gain a new insight into a song mid-performance and will emphasize certain words or moments.

I’ve been learning to sacrifice a piece of that infamous Leonine vanity onstage, though hands-down, I would much rather give a good performance than simply “look good.” LA certainly already has a surplus of those types lurking about.

Unfortunately, as a result, I am sure that there are more than a few incredibly unflattering images of me performing that I will no doubt have to live down!

Learn more at myspace.com/matherlouth or matherlouth.com.

valley in the afternoon

And my heart never saw it coming
Man who could get my blood running

Took me down to the valley in the afternoon

And when he once appeared to me
My thoughts had lost consistency

Took me down to the valley in the
afternoon

And try as I might
I didn’t stand a chance

Lord just the sight of him
my heart would dance

And he showed me secrets
looming in my flesh

Hands entwined together
where he knew me best

And when the autumn chill brought
the summer’s close

With lips on fire, I took his hand and
knew just where to go

Took him down to the valley in the
afternoon

He bring me flowers
He make love to me

We talk for hours
Now he sees through me, oh

Took him down to the valley in the afternoon

That’s right, took him down..
Led him by the hand
Breath already visible in the night sky

And with a sense of urgency
I shot him down in front of me

Dana Ward

Verisign after George Stanley

In Verisign, company of root name servers, digital certificates & managed firewalls
an un-bonded name I encoded myself through the screen

and thought of my mother and father who gave me that name
my father who loved novel gadgets & died before seeing the Internet

I wish he had lived a millennial life
& acquainted himself with encryption

I imagine my father had founded that service
where names & their various charm-bracelet numbers are covered in unyielding noise
there I might see not his name like my brother's, but another he'd love to have left me.

I wish that my father in his disaffection had joined a cabal of anarcho cyber-punks
having rejected the terminal privacy guiding his earlier efforts

I wish I appeared in the world as a stream of bad data
pirated, scurrilous code

& that eventually I went to work at Verisign
& pounding out opaque security protocols, I came across a line
a deformed string of alphanumeric instructions left there by some other writer—
 maybe my father
& it was not my name nor his nor familial monograms hidden therein
but one fatal error derived blast of meaningless letters—the name
 I could love

After 'A-11'

murmuring to the eaten lotus of cheap sherry
sun laying them out where they're buried they're somebody's baby tonight

I can't tell you how I'd have my family get down
in song's arms out of air?
left to song's care as a lovely provider?
the river was full
when I got here if I'm truly one of mom's plums
then I quit dying forever

Over the grave of my violin is an extracted crescent I can't hammer straight
as a place to lay frets
string the gold down & press softly so no sound produced
is a thing in their honor
my name isn't Paul my name's Dana
or the board's a too regular form & the world gives it up like a blue-gill
there's nothing more exhausting than the crude psychological pressure applied by the 'figure'
of parents
a drowsy bowed tone floats away from the body
he is dead we remain to grow pretty

The river was full when I got here.
I opened the frostbitten Ton-Ton to see a kind of won-ton
Soup biologically livid and steaming & stinking like dead horses piled
In snows of the north
But you can live there with only a thermos of port and a packet of crumbled saltines.
Then I saw the eyes of my mother appear
in the air an embriared favela broke free
& we found my father there dying among sarsaparilla
a phony pastoral favela that only a self-serving baby would dream
where his melanoma found its tissue spring.
a sand dollar thing in his throat
killed him.

Then viscera eloped with false consciousness
Over & over & over
I took the blood test
Wore all of the rings

I don't when it comes to this shit
Want to sing in the voice of men or angels or none of that shit I watch.
Overhead there's a nettle of Sistine crepe coming untangled and separately streaming aground
The sound of no pressure applied to the frets
Lest somebody think I was crying.
I really don't want to.

I don't really want to
But these guys are MAKING me
dapple my feelings on ice like the Maple Leaves
that's a hockey team
& I'm not on a hockey team
but if I, like Pindar, could speak of champions
would I hear the Rocky theme?
Damn.
Rest in peace Apollo Creed.
I'm a monster.
Everyday is Halloween.

continued, next panel

Cypress Street

Laurel ships slowly
genteel animations evolve into apathy
sunshine, I play my guitar.

Easy care willows make engineers weep for the days
of a landlocked Arcadia, Boise cascade
of reluctance
to flourish so simply.

Though my eyes are closed & my head is thrown back
I am lost from an intricate pleasure.

The blood/brain barrier blazes are cool
I spit in the spring water bottle
on Holderlin’s birthday
my love’s truest sea.

Honeysuckle

It’s like there’s cayenne in the petals but things having quit their embarrassed desire
to find themselves real made the flowers vanilla.

I think about drinking one of those vanilla beers with a blondish color
like a bean turning sour, or dying,

the fact of its shade is delicious, to gauge my feelings on the strangeness
of the “resistance Mickey”,

Mercy, the storm never coming ashore, its hot and about to rain anyway, hard
on the courtyard with weed-riven bricks.

Despised by the gardener, loved by the lover of sweet smelling flame who for nothing
would stand by its side

A regular pleasure with penitent manners that bows as if splendors were wakes

The gardener would cut it back dead so appropriate leaves, so appropriate flora would live
on the wildest hill its domestic,

The airy reactor of moonlight that wets fissile air as it moves through the yard, charged
with the work of deliverance,

bombs. I wonder if I should go in, turn the lights on & all of the faucets, the fans, the tv,
& the radio, tea-kettle, toaster

The sugar pill melts in the heart, & changes all the locks.

Dana Ward is a poet and editor and publisher living in Cincinnati, Ohio where he works days as an adult literacy advocate in the his beloved Over-The-Rhine neighborhood, and spends evenings writing at a green plastic table in lovely Northside.

An inveterate joiner, he belongs to associations such as the Brown Note Clique, City Club Crew, Publico Collective, MNDC, the PartDrama Theatre Ensemble and the American Whisper Band.

You can find him posted up in front of Publico the last Friday of every month and tipsy at the Gypsy Hut every single Monday.



Holly Picano



HOLLY PICANO
earned her degree in advertising design from the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. Her advertising background was a springboard for her

colorful, stylized portraits of women. With emotion fueled by music and pop culture, Picano creates flat color fields that have an electric “pop” when placed beside another, and this electricity becomes sensual when paired with erotic poses and suggestive looks. Besides being a featured artist at Walt Disney World, the Orlando Museum of Art, Universal Studios, the Hard Rock Hotel, and MTV, Picano’s works have been printed in the books *Madonna in Art* and *Marilyn in Art*. She recently was selected by the United Arts to appear painting in an advertisement.



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they are walking talking living dolls
their lipstick slick as a glacé cherry
lashes dark as the secrets they bury..."
Siobhan Logan

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Prosody Becomes Her: The Spirited Poetics of Annie Finch

For this significant print edition, I chose to review two acclaimed works of **Annie Finch** (*Calendars* and *The Body of Poetry*) out of curiosity to grasp contemporary poetic theory, especially women’s poetics from a recognized theorist and poet whose well-received works stand upon the inspirational shoulders of the poetic “mothers” of “(her)story.”

History’s best poets have always turned inward toward an introspective examining of the blueprint of their art and its relationship to humanity. Their aspirations were to understand its heart and soul and describe it as if it were the enigmatic answer of the ages. From the Classical era’s sages Plato and Socrates; Renaissance’s Spencer, Milton, and Shakespeare; Enlightenment’s Voltaire; Victorian’s Browning’s, Tennyson, Kipling, and Hardy; Romanticism’s Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Poe, Whitman, and Dickinson; Realism’s Flaubert; Modernism’s Cocteau, Eliot, Proust, Yeats, and even our contemporary Jack Gilbert, Carl Sandburg, Leonard Cohen, Robert Frost, Rita Dove, Octavio Paz, and Maya Angelou, they have all attempted to illustrate the impact of poetry on civilization, but most especially on the soul.

A sampling of their insights reveals poetry as music, the music of the soul, thoughts that breathe, words that burn, sacred, salvation, the revelation, a revolutionary blueprint, a shining lamp, a very faint star, an echo, a speaking picture, a painting with the gift of speech, a room built around us, common sense, and geometry.

Additionally, they described poetry as a phantom script, our bitter heart, man’s rebellion, a mirror, evidence of life, life distilled, rhythmical creation of beauty, and the art of substantiating shadows. It is like being nearer to vital truth than history; a tool that gives us time to see each thing separate and enough, that makes the private world public, and in a mystical-like method, the source that extends inner life. [1]

Behind this scrim of insight exists a simple fact we often overlook because our sights are so often upon the grandiose. The simplistic fact is this -- good poetry moves us. It reaches through our egotistical, analytical, and discriminating senses; it speaks to the heart of us, feels like a warm creature or a spark of fire, living things. The result is an illumination of knowledge, the expanding of our spirit, and a transformation, as if we have just stepped through a door into a new world with a new soul.

This transformative influence of the poet on the adoring reader is perfectly described by Annie Finch in her beautiful poem “Letter to Emily Dickinson.” Honoring her beloved mother-poet, Finch writes: “I take from you, as you take me apart.”

This active connectivity and concept of response is the root of poetry’s power: the reader takes from the poet her insights, attitudes, knowledge, images, vision, etc. and absorbs everything. Taken to heart, the poet’s voice and words haunt the landscapes of our inner self, challenge the meaning of what we have learned and think we know. Bit by every minute bit, then, we are taken apart and refashioned.

It is upon this framework that I wish to introduce the poetry and essays of the masterful Annie Finch (poet, translator, librettist, formalist, feminist, experimentalist, and a traditionalist), particularly her acclaimed collection *Calendars* and the scholarly *The Body of Poetry: Essays on Women, Form, and the Poetic Self*.

Calendars consists of forty-eight exquisite poems that span an impressive thirty years (1970 to 2000) of writing. The delightful cover is a black and white photo that has the illusion of age. It consists of what I believe to be four sisters, attired in raincoats and galoshes. One sister is pacing at the edge of what appears to be an overlook, while her younger sisters play around and on top of a great slab of stone held up by a natural rock column. Do the four sisters represent the four guardian horizons: North, South, East, and West, or Nature’s four seasons? Or, do they simply symbolize the gradual transformation from innocent childhood to womanhood?

Whatever they represent, the photographer captured the girls at the forefront of a vast open landscape stretching out from them like a wild, unforgiving sea. Thematically, the cover is a splendid accoutrement for Finch’s examination of womanhood, nature, poetic ancestry (or herstory), prosodic historicity, adventure, seasons, cycles, rites of passage, discovery, culture, death, loss, community, hope, and vision.

At the heart of Annie Finch lies a soul whose groundwork is tilled and trained in the art of quietude, a “sincerity of the individual self, or soul.” [2] And it is this foundation that gives Finch not only an endearing quality but the credibility to represent the art in her essays and especially her manifesto “Omniformalism,” which lists the six guidelines a poet should apply if they wish to create the poetic beauty readers are ravenous for: Physicality, Permeability, Structure, Continuity, and Mystery. [3]

Calendars is more than richly meaningful themes. I am equally impressed by Finch’s transformative language, imagery, sincere voice, mystical tendencies, and most importantly, her masterful prosody -- its musicality and skilled metric structure.

In many poems, Finch’s compilation of words creates an accentual meter, combined with the poem’s themes, evokes the rhythm of songs, a lyrical communion with things. Consider the hymn-like rhythm of the beautiful “Landing Under Water, I See Roots:”

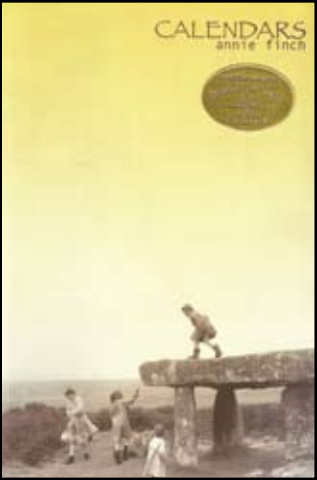
All the things we hide in water
hoping we won’t see them go—
(forests growing under water
press against the ones we know)—

and they might have gone on growing
and they might now breathe above
everything I speak of sowing
(everything I try to love). [4]

Calendars is replete with delightful prose as exhibited above. Most striking to me is how comfortable Finch’s words weave in and around the meter. There are so many variances, even nuances, of language and rhythm, structure and theme, and metaphor and metonymy. Yet Finch time and again lays out a poem so effortlessly, naturally. The skill behind this may be explained in her essay “The Body of Poetry,” in which she writes: “When I invent a stanza, match a rhyme, ease a meter through, I feel spiritually connected to timeless traditions of crafts worldwide such as embroidery, weaving, and pottery; I feel connected not only with Pre-Raphaelite artisans or medieval scribes but with the makers of a Turkish carpet or Celtic brooch, expressing the central joy of worship by crafting a worthy object.” [5]

Besides this captivating and endearing mystical modus operandi, Finch is simply a master of meter, displaying a distinct, complex, yet highly readable metrical system, most

continued, next panel



unique for contemporary poets. I dare say, in fact, that Finch may just be one of meter’s most ardent proponents today. Why this adoration? Finch answers this very question in her essay “Metrical Subversions:”

“Meter is the gift that poetry gives me before words, through words, and after words. To hear meter is for me the most intimate part of reading and writing a poem, because it is impossible for it to be translated or told; it can only be experienced as the waving form of words and syllables carrying their rhythm, and metrical energy, the particular current of their rhythm, and everything that rhythm makes visible, audible, palpable.” [6]

The poetry of Annie Finch literally breathes with beautiful prosody. Consider her poems “Wild Yeasts,” “Earth Goddess and Sky God,” “Two Bodies,” “Conversation,” “Paravaledellentine: A Paradelle,” “A Wedding On Earth,” and this “A Dance for the Inland Sea:”

Water that moves, in a bodylike stream,
through its cool channels fills the warm prairie’s dream.
Waking to tend it, the grass-moving sky
pours with grasses. Big Bluestem’s drinking roots lie
nine feet down the waving, remembering sod
they have swum through, to feed on, to build. When it
swings

like a wing in small flight, when it sways,
turkey feet murmur, red three-toed feet sing.

Little Bluestem, as copper as autumn or clay,
floating seeds past the prairie’s dense, watery hand
till they shimmer to columns, wet smoke on the land;

Indian Grass, lapping up the spattering sun;
prairies step slower than palaces, down
under the teeming roof of the ground,
quiet as animals. Then, when they rise,
prairies, like palaces, loom and surprise. [7]

There are a compilation of eight essays that focus on prosody in her work *The Body of Poetry*: to name a few, “Dactylic Meter: A Many-Sounding Sea,” “The Ghost of Meter Revisted,” and “In Defense of Meter.” [8]

These essays, convincingly, explain her prosodic philosophy, spotlight her breadth of knowledge and skill, and persuade us to consider a revitalization of the form. Finch accomplishes all of this without the slightest schoolmarm-ish tone. I never felt like she was standing over me in a McCarthy-like manner pounding the table with a long wooden pointer to the beat of the meter. Her own poetic meter, likewise, never sounds like it was fashioned in a university workshop, full of inchoate

phrases compressed to fit the meter or sophomoric thoughts thrown together to create the ending rhyme.

No. Finch’s prosody isn’t dug up from the grave and dressed with new clothes. This is living meter, prose that feels fresh, lived in, and as wise as a sage.

An aspect of poetry’s power is its sound and musicality, which sustain the oral traditions of learning through recitation, maintaining communal ties, connecting to the divine, and passing on the stories of the ancestors.

The use of repetition in poetry helps create this orality, lyrical communion, and foundation of sound and music.

Finch believes repetition has an aural, visual, and conceptual presence. She writes: “Repetition does not only make a poem easy to remember; it can lull the logical part of the brain, hypnotize a listener, transport a reader into a new state of mind, speak directly to the physical, irrational part of our brains. Like the drumbeat of a shaman, poetic repetition can move language far out of its normal realm. That is the paradox of poetic technology: it is at once replicable and ineffable, mundane and transformative. To work with poetic craft in a skilled and attentive way brings us full circle back out of the realm of craft and into the realm of inspiration.” [9]

Finch’s poems employ repetition masterfully so that, conceptually, it manages the poem’s meaning, and aurally, it makes the words dance upon the tongue and sing in their artful reverberations.

The perfect paradigm of what I mean by repetition’s conceptual use exists in Finch’s poem “To Vivienne Eliot,” a masterfully structured juxtaposition of two women characters -- T.S. Eliot’s wife, Vivienne (who Eliot had committed to an asylum and never visited) and the Greek prophetess Cassandra (who Apollo cursed -- she was forced to tell the truth but no one would believe her).

In the poem (listed below), I have numbered the lines for ease of explanation. The odd-numbered lines are narrated to Vivienne Eliot, while the even-numbered lines are descriptions of Cassandra. I have also lettered each repetitive phrase to highlight Finch’s structure.

Finch employs repetition throughout Vivienne’s story and it creates an hour glass-like structure that goes from the visual characteristics of the women down to the centrifugal point wherein lies the heart of the poem; after this, the repetition returns back to the beginning characteristics.

Notice how phrases A and B always go together except directly in the middle of the poem, line 5, where there exists

the only non-repetitive phrase. This structure is thematically masterful for it helps illuminate the most important and devastating fact of the poem – Vivienne’s “man is gone.”

1. Your gray dress stings [A] in the canopied dawn [B]
2. (Cassandra has hair that is twisted, and curls)
3. your eyes aren’t closed and your hair is wild [C]
4. (she is gaunt, very strong, as loud as a gong)
5. your gray dress stings, [A] and the man is gone
6. (going morning, and there is nothing she ignores)
7. your eyes aren’t closed, your hair is wild [C]
8. (If I watch her face curl, burned with anger, the pearl)
9. your gray dress stings [A] in the canopied dawn [B]
10. (that has coated the sand will dissolve in my hand) [10]

Finch also uses repetition in the fine poems: “The Menstrual Hut,” “Name,” “Final Autumn,” “Without a Bird,” “Paravaledellentine: A Paradelle,” and “Belly.”

The poetry of Annie Finch captivates me. She displays poetic skill as polished as any of the greats. I likewise find her utterly endearing, exuding an intimacy with the subject matter that astounds and a general perceptive eye and soul – she is ever thoughtful in her treatment of people, places, and experiences. Her poetry is an homage to the art.

The concept of non-metrical poetry introduced by Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Robinson Jeffers may be too ingrained in our creative subconscious to see a new ascendance of prosody. But Annie Finch makes more than a convincing case for its beauty, artistry, timelessness, and most importantly, impact.

Calendars and *The Body of Poetry* are important works not only for poetry’s sake but for their historical significance – contemporary works not only celebrating prosody but convincingly arguing that meter has a bright heritage and future. Likewise, *The Body of Poetry* seems a highly applicable must-read for any poetry enthusiast. It would work especially well as a text book for any university course tackling the writing or analysis of poetry.

Great film directors help their actors achieve that “real” performance. When I read Annie Finch, I feel that within the walls of the many worlds she has portrayed in miniature breathe some of the most “real” and living poetry around. In her thoughtful rites-of-passage poem “Menstrual Hut,” in

which a young woman’s innocence of her body is awakened and she learns to listen to the cycles of the moon, the narrator proclaims “Now I am the one with eyes.”

This perfectly sums up Annie Finch’s effect on me.

Footnotes:

1. Italics represents excerpts of quotes compiled from various quote servers on the world-wide web from Voltaire, Leonard Cohen, Jack Gilbert, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, So Chong Ju, Percy Shelley, Plato, Gustave Flaubert, Salvatore Quasimodo, Gwendolyn Brooks, Thomas Gray, Edmund Burke, Edgar Allen Poe, Stephen Crane, Semonides, Maya Angelou, Octavia Paz, John Masefield, June Jordan, and Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg).
2. Finch, Annie. *The Body of Poetry: Essays on Women, Form, and the Poetic Self*, The University of Michigan Press, 2005. Page 25.
3. *ibid*, pages 22, 23.
4. Finch, Annie. *Calendars*. Tupelo Press, 2000. page 3.
5. Finch, *The Body of Poetry*, page 27.
6. *ibid*, page 12.
7. Finch, *Calendars*, page 68.
8. The full list of eight essays on meter are: “Metrical Diversity,” “Metrical Subversions: Prosody, Poetry, and My Affair with the Amphibrach,” “H.D., ‘Imagiste’?” “Dactylic Meter: A Many-Sounding Sea,” “A Rock in the River: Maxine Kumin’s Rhythmic Countercurrents,” “The Ghost of Meter Revisted,” “Making Shattered Faces Whole: The Metrical Code in Audre Lorde,” and “In Defense of Meter.”
9. Finch, “The Body of Poetry,” page 46.
10. Finch, *Calendars*, page 7.

OMNIFORMALISM

1. PHYSICALITY – We have a madness for poems that pound in the blood, that are moved into three dimensions by the immanent necessities of their form, that know the stubborn patterns and rhythms the world keeps.
2. PERMEABILITY – We hunger for poetry that moves freely between schools and cultures and traditions and eras of poetics and is nourished by conflicting influences.
3. STRUCTURE – We lust for poems that reflect or refract patterns in their craft, that build their own shapes either strange or easy, that challenge and explore unfamiliar pattern and also appreciate and sustain the familiar.
4. KINSHIP – We want poems that reach out as much as in. We hunger for poetry that marks and leaves a mark on human occasions. We desire poems that carry and connect with desire.
5. CONTINUITY – Disagreement is not murder, and different choices my not mean disagreement. WE resist the Oedipal model of tradition and hunger for sustainable, as well as exploratory, poetics.
6. MYSTERY – We delight that manifestos will never contain poetry. We have a mad desire for poetry that keeps something we cannot understand.

Finch, Annie. *The Body of Poetry: Essays on Women, Form, and the Poetic Self*, The University of Michigan Press, 2005. Pages 22, 23.

Campbell McGrath

Papyrus

1.

The opposite of sunlight
is not darkness but anti-light,
a mass of ionic occlusion,
seams of which riven
with purple fire illuminate
the parataxis of butterflies
and the dark waters
full of lobsters in migration
like a poetry that moves
from surreal to confessional to
whatever it is it is then.

2.

The code breakers in the end
were revealed to have deciphered
messages that had never been
encrypted. The less said about
that unfortunate situation
the better. $6 + 1 = 9$
is a proposition that refutes
the hierarchical structures
of the old math but not to mean
is a misuse of the medium
and all non-meaning is equally
meaningless. The system,
it turns out, is not substantive
but mediative and translational,
a conjury of rooster bones
and wish fulfillment.

3.

History is continuous
and embraces everything
without exception, wise rule
and waste management,
famine and falling leaves.
We could set out in skiffs
to hunt hippopotami
in the delta marshes
as the Egyptians did
but words do not engage
their meaning. They enable it.
With sharpened sticks
we might yet succeed but
the breeding grounds
are protected by the gods
and that animal is more food
than our village requires.

4.

And then the play is over
and the crew dismantling sets
is drinking too much coffee
and sussing a name for what
is neither hinge nor lever.
Not gloss but habitat.
They live there, like polyps
behind the mirror with
an adhesion defying logic.
Remove the cyclorama
that is language
and you can watch the cogs
and gears revolve
but you must put it back
to describe them.

Stars

They possess an aspect as of gravity, as of the void
to fill which our hearts offer themselves
upon an altar of moonlight.

The vastness and tinyness of existence
is like a holy text writ upon a grain of rice, or a star.

The way attention skitters from light on wineglasses
table to table resembles them, as too
a bossa nova symphony of bassoons and slide guitar.

The loneliness of atoms is astonishing,
like the sight of stars from a vessel at sea.

The night retains textures and empathies
that might be signals from angels or distant stars,
and the trees assume dream-shapes
we do not recognize and can never truly know.

Stars are but diacritical marks
upon the night's cosmological syntax.

We are human, and our form is a corruption of starlight
poured like heavy syrup into soft-skinned molds,
like decorative soaps, or candles.

Like the stars we burn fiercely, reluctantly,
as a dragon consumes its golden hoard.

Of my eyes, of my skin, the stars shall know nothing.

Time

Not an absence but a presence,
dense as any mineral, certain as sour wood.

We move through it like termites
tunneling dim passages beneath the visible,

miners seeking a way forward with faulty lamps,
brief lights in the blackness, the match-strike

of consciousness enacting its doomed insurgency
against the dark mountain.

Campbell McGrath has published six books, but the poems in this issue of *MiPo* are from his next collection, *Seven Notebooks*, forthcoming from Ecco Press in January, 2008. A MacArthur and Guggenheim Fellow, McGrath lives with his family in Miami Beach and teaches in the MFA program at Florida International University, where he is the Philip and Patricia Frost Professor of Creative Writing.



Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop

M

- 1
Motion, a motion of, say, the heavens
- 2
Or motion, say, of light through water
that makes the water more than simply water
- 3
Or, say, the motion of water, well not simply
water, but waters, as they make the light
waver on millions of waves, crest and trough
- 4
Or, again, the motion of the “heavens”
outward against galactic gravities could make it
in millions of years crest, if strong enough, and undo itself
the manifold a mere long drawn out dream of space
- 5
Well, then, “heavenly” motion
which could make grave galaxies undo themselves
in millions of ears (if strong enough)
mere space for long slow dreams
that might sound from the wavering light
- 6
These different motions, “heavenly” or otherwise
make waves of light for who has
ears to hear (no millions required)
translate mere space not only into dreams
but sounds that might ring clearer than the spheres
a music of peculiar motions in the head

P

- 1
great numbers of particulars so scattered and diffuse
- 2
Some number of particulars, definitively scattered
a perfect gas, dark sun
- 3
Particulars, definitively scattered
a perfect gas, dark sun
with random perturbations in the otherwise

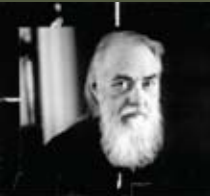
Q

- 1
What is the question?
- 2
How can we question
the quotation?
- 3
We don’t question
the quotation but
repeat it querulously
- 4
Not questioned (the
quotation) how
close can we get to querulous?
almost? not quite?
- 5
out of the question to
doubt the quotation
but querulous we are
quite unable
to quit fussing for answers

Keith Waldrop’s recent books of poetry include *The Real Subject* (Omnidawn), *The House Seen from Nowhere* (Litmus Press), *Haunt* (Instance Press), and the trilogy: *The Locality Principle*, *The Silhouette of the Bridge* (America Award, 1997) and *Semiramis*, *If I Remember* (Avec Books).

Rosmarie Waldrop’s trilogy (*The Reproduction of Profiles*, *Lawn of Excluded Middle* and *Reluctant Gravities*) has just been reprinted by New Directions under the title: *Curves to the Apple*. Other recent books of poetry are *Splitting Images* (Zasterle), *Blindsight* (New Directions) and *Love, Like Pronouns* (Omnidawn). Her collected essays, *Dissonance (if you are interested)*, was published by University of Alabama Press in 2005.

Together, Keith and Rosmarie have published *Well Well Reality* (collected collaborations, Post-Apollo Press) and *Ceci n’est pas Keith Ceci n’est pas Rosmarie* (autobiographies, Burning Deck), and translated Jacques Roubaud’s poems on the streets of Paris: *The Form of a City Changes Faster, Alas, Than the Human Heart* (Dalkey Archive, 2006). They co-edit Burning Deck Press in Providence.



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***PJ=**podcast jockey

ABOUT MIPO

MiPOesias is a typographical error. On November 8, 2000, the domain name was mistyped during purchase. A year later, John Tate III, a writer from the poetry community, began calling the magazine “MiPO.” This abbreviation was easier to pronounce and has stuck with us ever since.

Starting with the September 2007 issue, *MiPO* will be published quarterly in print and online. This does not include our guest-edited issues, which are available only online. The amount of guest-edited issues varies from year to year. *OCHO*, MiPOesias print companion, has been published since 2006 eight times a year, with 2008 being the last year of publication and only one issue is scheduled for 2008.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Though we primarily solicit work, we are open to hearing from poets and short fiction writers who believe their work is appropriate for MiPO. If you would like to submit to *MiPOesias Magazine*, please email didimenendez@gmail.com explaining why your work should be published. Please include a short biography and any links to your work. Please do not send us poems for consideration with your request. Past contributors are encouraged to re-apply.

Submissions for Special Guest Editions of *MiPOesias Magazine* and *OCHO* are requested via solicitation by guest editors. Previous guest editors include Nick Carbo, Evie Shockley, Gabriel Gudding, Tom Beckett, and David Trinidad.

We accept only unpublished poetry, and on occasion, we accept short stories and essays. Please do not send us work under consideration by another editor. Submissions previously posted on personal blogs, discussion forums, and other journals/magazines online and in print will not be considered for publication. Publication notification may take four to eight months. Please email us at mipoesias@gmail.com if you have not heard from us within eight months.

MiPO’s blog, mipoesias.blogspot.com, is used to post notices of new work and news. Letters to the editor may be left in the comment boxes

miPORadio: where poetry tunes in... (miporadio.com) features poetic programming, including interviews and live readings.

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MORE INFORMATION

MiPOesias Reading Series: All published writers are invited to read at Stain Bar in Brooklyn, NY. Please e-mail Amy King at amyhappens@gmail.com to let her know your availability.

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RECOGNITIONS

Pushcart Prize – Best of the Small Press Series – www.pushcartprize.com

Lorna Dee Cervantes – “Shelling The Pecans,” published in *OCHO* #6, edited by Didi Menendez was selected by Pushcart Editors for the 2008 anthology (release date: November 2007)

Best American Poetry – www.bestamericanpoetry.com

Reb Livingston – “That’s Not Butter,” published in *MiPOesias Magazine* 2005, edited by Gabriel Gudding was selected by Billy Collins for the Best American Poetry Series (2006).

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING CALL OUT TO
CUBAN-AMERICANS

MiPOesias Magazine seeks submissions from the Cuban-American poets for an upcoming special edition. The publication is scheduled to launch online in Spring 2008. Writers living anywhere in the United States are encouraged to submit five to seven (5-7) poems to mipoesias@earthlink.net.

We are interested in contemporary, well-crafted verse that reflects today’s hyphen-American culture and concerns. We seek modern voices with fresh perspectives. Please, no poems about palm trees and mangos and nostalgia for the island. We are not accepting poems written exclusively in Spanish; we will consider Spanglish or *dicharachos* within the poems’ content.

Deadline for submissions is December 15.

Emma Trelles, a South Florida poet and arts writer for the *Sun-Sentinel*, is editing this special edition of *MiPOesias Magazine*.

Again, please note that this call for poetry is open only to Cuban-American writers living in the USA.

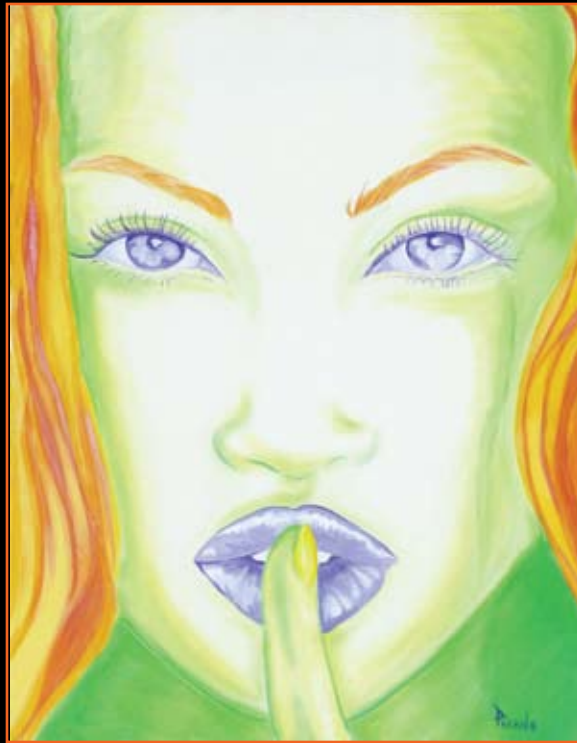


EMMA TRELLES’ Mpoems and essays have appeared in *New Millennium Writings*, *Gulf Stream*, *Newsday*, the *Miami Herald* and *Latina* magazine. She is the editor of the third edition of the *Tigertail Poetry Anthology* and has taught creative writing at the Florida Center for the Literary Arts and at Florida International University. She is the arts writer for the South Florida *Sun-Sentinel*. Sometimes, at night, she sings and plays bass guitar for Secret P.E. Club.

The head office for *MiPOesias Magazine* (Menendez Publications) is located in Bloomington, Illinois. Our editorial staff is located in Brooklyn, New York. Our PDF production company is located in Los Angeles, California.

MiPOesias Magazine is privately owned by Didi Menendez. It is not part of an institution. The staff relies only on the generous creativity of contemporary writers and our own aesthetic inclinations to guide us.

MiPOesias



coming soon
The SEXY Issue